

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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"The Right Hon. Gentleman, [Mr. Pitt] who takes great pride to himself for the support he is about to lend to his successors in office, has made a *strange assertion*: according to him, *the worse the country is situated, the more ready should the House be to lend their assistance to ministers*. What would be the effect of such doctrine, if it were to be adopted by the House? Would it not *annihilate their first duties*, by extinguishing that vigilance and jealousy by which alone those duties can be performed?"  
—MR. SHERIDAN'S SPEECH, FEB. 16, 1801.—*Debrett's Parliamentary Register*, Vol. II. of 1801, p. 158.

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## LETTER III.

TO R. B. SHERIDAN, ESQ. M. P.

SIR,—The desire which I have to preserve my proper place in the estimation of honourable men, is the motive by which I have been actuated in hitherto seriously addressing you on the subject of your misrepresentations; but, in coming to your *fourth charge*, I am really at a loss to know how to answer, with a grave face, to the general accusation of treating "*with derision and contempt the GOVERNMENT and all the SUB-ALTERN ENTRUSTED POWERS*." You could not have been serious in preferring this charge. It must have been meant as one of those banTERS, with which you are in the habit of entertaining the House; and the mortification that you must have experienced, at its failing to excite bursts of laughter, must have been little short of that which you are said to have suffered, when, on the first representation of your other *School for Scandal*, the audience, in sober simplicity, applauded all the fine sentiments uttered by Joseph Surface, while Lady Teazle was concealed behind the screen. How could your new right honourable friends, cheek by jowl with you on the Treasury Bench, have so mistaken you! You, whom, for years, they have never known, except by the epigrams and jests, by which you have derided and endeavoured to bring into contempt, every branch and power of the government, whether civil, military, or ecclesiastical!—But, Sir, in proceeding to the charge itself, the first thing that strikes one, is, its curious phraseology. What do you mean by "*the GOVERNMENT and all the SUBALTERN ENTRUSTED POWERS*?" You could hardly mean the *King's ministers and their underlings*? To have extended your notice to the clerks in office would have been a striking instance indeed of the art of sinking in oratory. What, then, did you wish to be understood by these quaint terms? Your and my Sovereign, and the ministers under him? I wish not to lay too much stress on the words of a news-paper report: but, besides

the agreement of several news papers, as to this point, there are some marks of internal evidence, which show it to have been the fair sense of your language. Why, then, instead of the person of his Majesty, did you substitute the abstract term *government*, unless it were for the pleasure of introducing one of your old jacobinical sophistries? The expression may, indeed, frequently be used; but, it is peculiarly improper, where it is applied in reference to a supposed libellous attack, which must always be presumed to be directed against some living person, and not against a metaphysical creature of the imagination or the intellect.—The government, properly so called, is a monarchy, consisting of Kings, Lords, and Commons, or, in another view, of the Church and the State. To prove, that I had *not* derided or contemned *this government* is what I am not called upon to do; it was your place to prove that I *had*; but, if to have been, during the whole of my political life, the constant eulogist of this government; if to have extolled it as the wisest, the most just, the most merciful, and the most free, in the world; if to have exerted all my feeble powers in showing its superiority over even the government of the country in which I was many years residing; if to have zealously, perseveringly, and disinterestedly, endeavoured to defend it against all its revilers, foreign and domestic, *yourself* not excepted: if never to have let fall one single expression disrespectful towards his Majesty, or towards any one member of his family; if, on all occasions to have made it my pride to be devoted to my Sovereign; if to have constantly boasted of my allegiance to him, as the greatest of honours; if to have sacrificed my interest and my ease, to have borne persecution, to have lost my property, and to have risked my life, rather than remain silent in the hearing of his slanderers: if all these amount to a proof of my not having derided and contemned the government of my country, that proof will, I trust, be found upon record, long after your factious rabble-coaxing harangues shall have sunk into their merited



oblivion.—It is, however, fair, I think, to presume, that you meant to charge me with treating the *ministers* with derision and contempt, an act which, I hope, is not very criminal, because, of it I do really feel myself compelled to plead guilty.—It is my duty “to honour and obey the King, and all that are put in authority under him.” The King can do no wrong: I am not at liberty to judge of his actions; and, I am bound, at all times, to yield him honour and obedience. But, as to those who are put in authority under him, the obligation is very different indeed. With respect to them I have the power and right of judging; and, considering them individually, I am bound to give to each no other honour than that which is *due* from me to him, and to submit to no other than his *lawful* authority.—It is, too, very evident, that the injunction, on which this doctrine is founded, applies to none but *magistrates*, or persons whose office it is to enforce the execution of the *laws*; persons bearing to the people the behests of the king; and, even to such persons, at such times only as they are acting in their official capacities, and while they confine their actions within the bounds of the law. As to the application, then, of this religious principle, vast indeed is the difference between a *magistrate* and a *minister*; the office of the former is unchangeable in its nature, and is necessary to the existence of the monarchy, while the nature of the latter may be varied at pleasure, and while the thing itself may be dispensed with. The magistrate is the executor of laws already made and sanctioned, and therefore, he comes to us clothed with the whole authority of the state; whereas, in the minister we see nothing but the projector of measures, which measures we have always a right, and, it is sometimes our duty, to criticize, to find fault with, to remonstrate against, and to prevent the execution of by all the lawful means in our power; the magistrate speaks the commands of the King, the minister is only his *adviser*, an office totally unknown to the law: as minister, therefore, he is *not put in authority over the people*, nor is he, merely because he is minister, entitled to any honour or obedience from them. He is, indeed, the servant of the King, and that circumstance will necessarily add weight to the character which he may already possess; but, of itself, it gives him no title to honour or obedience, any more than if he were the King's gardener instead of his minister. Viewing ministers in this light, it follows of course, that I by no means regard them as shielded from that derision

and contempt, which glaring imbecility and meanness seldom fail to bring upon the rest of mankind; and, as I freely confess, that I have derided and contemned, and that I still do deride and condemn, the present ministers, it only remains for me to shew, that this derision and contempt are justly bestowed; a task, Sir, in which I beg leave to avail myself of your assistance.—In justification of any part of my conduct, public or private, God forbid that I should ever plead your example; but, in a case where the charge turns merely upon opinion, and where it is preferred by you, I am certainly free to cite the opinion, which you have expressed upon the subject. Let us see, then, what this opinion is.—During the debate of Feb. 16, 1801, on the motion for the House to go into a Committee of Supply, you took some little pains to give an adequate description of the present ministers. After drawing an horrible caricature of the state of the country, as to its warlike and pecuniary means; after pathetically lamenting the creation of 300,000,000 of debt and “the *widowing* of the country of 200,000 men;” after rejecting, with disdain, the doctrine of supporting ministers, because the nation was upon the brink of ruin; after censuring Mr. Pitt for his apparent intention to support his successors, you declared those successors to be unworthy of the confidence of the House, and you gave of them the following description;—“It is triumphantly asked, “whether our allies and the people will “not look for the same degree of vigour “and ability from the new-administration, “standing on the same ground and fighting the same battle as their predecessors? I must certainly reply in the negative. The reasoning on this occasion is “of a most singular description. When “the crew of a vessel is preparing for action, it is usual, I know, to clear the “decks by throwing overboard the lumber; but I never heard of such a manœuvre as that of throwing their great “guns over board. It is not usual, I believe, when a ship is to be boarded, for “the great cannonades, on the quarter-deck, loaded with grape-shot, to be sent “to the sea, rather than pointed at the “enemy. Nor (since I am upon similes “of vessels) will he be reckoned a good “captain, who, in a storm, or in case of “flight, instead of cutting away the broken masts to lighten the vessel, allows “them to stand and only cuts away the “helm. But, as these similes, however “frequently used, are sometimes misun-



“derstood, I will draw one from a practice, which is much in use amongst ourselves. When an election committee is formed, the watchword is, to shorten the business by *knocking out the brains*, that is, by striking from the committee-list the names of those gentlemen, who may happen to understand the subject. In this sense, the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Pitt) has now, literally *knocked out the brains of the Administration*, and then, clapping a *mask* on the *skeleton*, he cries, here is as fine vigour and talent for you as any body can wish to see! This *empty skull*, this *skeleton administration*, this is the *phantom* that is to over-awe our enemies, and to command the confidence of the House and of the people.”—This, Sir, was the picture, which you drew of the ministry, of those very same men, the treating of whom with derision and contempt you have now thought proper to impute to me as a political crime. You will hardly attempt to come off by pretending, that, at the time when you drew this picture, you were unacquainted with the great virtues and talents, which you have since discovered in the Addingtons and Hawkesburies; but, if you should, I shall ask you to name the epoch when this discovery was made; because, at the end of fifteen months, from the time when the speech above quoted was delivered, I still find you treating the ministers with all possible derision and contempt.—“There,” said you, in your speech of the 14th of May, 1802, “There he (Mr. Addington) sits to receive the attacks of the new confederacy, who are not strong in numbers, but great in talents. He is a sort of *out-side passenger*, or rather a *man leading the horses round a corner*, while reins and whip and all are in the hands of the coachman on the box [looking at Mr. Pitt, who sat above Mr. Addington]. When the ex-minister quitted office almost all the subordinate ministers kept their places. How was this? The only way in which I can solve this division of parts is this:—Aristophanes tells a story somewhat in point. He says, that Theseus sat so long in one posture, (perhaps as long as the ex-minister sat on the Treasury Bench) that he adhered to the seat; so that, when Hercules came to snatch him away, in a sudden jerk, a *certain portion* of his *SITTING PART* was left behind him [Loud and long peals of laughter]. The House can make the application.”—Yes, Sir,

it was, indeed, very easy to make the application, and, I dare say, you wish it was as easy for you to blot both application and fable from the pages of the Parliamentary Reports, and from the memory of the nation.

—If, Sir, the ministers were not proper objects of derision and contempt, how are we to account for your conduct; and, if they were, to what are we to ascribe the charge, which you have now preferred against me? For, I hardly think you will contend, that the right of bestowing derision and contempt upon ministers belongs exclusively to you, whether we consider you as the maker of speeches or the writer of plays. Unless, therefore, you can deduce some reason from the subsequent conduct of ministers, or from the circumstances of the times, you will, I imagine, find it very difficult indeed to maintain those pretensions to consistency, which of late you have so indiscreetly put forward. What, then, since you called them an *empty skull*, have the ministers done to regain, or rather to create and to acquire your respect? If you reply, that they have *made peace*, you are still embarrassed with the odious, the foul, and almost filthy picture which you drew of them in May 1802, *after* the peace was made and ratified. And, what have they done since the ratification of the peace of Amiens; since you represented them as out-side passengers upon the state coach, as postillions, as the *sitting part* of their predecessors; which of their actions, which of the blessings that they have, since that time, brought upon their country, which of their achievements is it, that has wrought so wonderful a change in your opinion, that has transformed you from their assailant into their defender? Were you converted by observing the salutary effects of the peace; by contemplating the tranquillity and security enjoyed by the nation from May 1802, to March 1803? Was it the discovery made by the bundle of garbled papers relative to the negotiations at Paris; was it the conduct of ministers with respect to Mr. Peltier and the Press, the French Royalists, Switzerland, Holland, the Cape, Captain D’Auvergne, and the French Commercial Agents; was it the renewal of the war just after the surrender of our conquests had been completed; was it their economy in dismantling the fleet and disbanding the army, or their liberality in imposing twelve millions of new taxes; was it their measures with regard to Hanover, their activity in England, their vigilance in Ireland; was it their coalescing with Mr. Tierney, or was it, Sir, their re-



jection of the offer of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales? What, again I ask, what part of their conduct, what point in the series which terminated with their becoming your miserable puppets; what particular instance, in this long course of imbecility and meanness, is now to have the honour of being chosen as the foundation of your change of opinion; of serving you as a justification for having become the panegyrist of men, whom you have heretofore uniformly treated with every mark of derision and contempt?—Will you say, that your opinion of the ministers is not changed, and that your private feelings have yielded to the public good, which, in such perilous times, demands a suspension of all party hostility? Will you plead your “true English feeling,” and will you tell me, that it is not my derision and contempt, as considered merely with respect to ministers, that you find fault with, but, as considered with respect to the *times*? Yes, this is the justification, which you set up, and which your numerous typographical friends and companions are daily endeavouring to palm upon the world. But, Sir, how will you, upon this principle, justify the derision and contempt, which you lavished on the ministers in February, 1801, a season of great danger, and of public anxiety and alarm almost unparalleled in our history? The ministers, these very ministers, had just been nominated to their offices, but, owing to the indisposition of his Majesty, they had not as yet been duly invested with official authority. During this distressing and awful interval, all party hostility would indeed have been suspended, and even forgotten, by any man who had a true English heart in his bosom; but, this was the time which you selected for the purpose of decrying the persons whom his Majesty had appointed to be his ministers; this was the very time which you chose for representing them as an inefficient brainless crew; and, when you were reminded of the perils of the country, your answer was, that to yield to such reasoning, would be to suffer the *annihilation of the first duties of Parliament*. \*—Leaving you, Sir, to reconcile your own practice with the rule of conduct, which you wish to impose upon me, I shall close this letter with an observation applicable to all the charges, which were brought against me by you and your coadjutor Mr. Archdall, and which, if I am not deceived, I have completely refuted.—These charges appear to have

arisen from your want of discerning the great difference between my situation and views, and the situation and views of yourself and Mr. Archdall. This your worthy colleague has actually fallen into the course, towards which you have, for some time, been bending: he is already creeping under the tree, the fruit of which you have long been eyeing from a distance, and which you are now approaching by slow, and, as you think, certain steps. I blame, therefore, the conduct neither of you nor Mr. Archdall, as far as relates to your endeavours to prop up the minister; for, according to the opinion of that great moralist, Rabelais, whose principles and pursuits seem to have borne some affinity to your own, “*si le singe a de l’or à donner, il faut toujours ôter son chapeau au singe.*” What I complain of is, that you should expect and demand from me conduct similar to yours, when you must know, that I am not actuated by similar motives. For you to crave a truce to all opposition; for you to cry, “never mind who is minister;” for you to ask for confidence in men in a direct proportion to the danger produced by their measures; for you to applaud the sencerity of “a mask;” for you to confide in the wisdom of an “empty skull;” for you to rely on the vigour of “a skeleton;” for you to adore the “sitting part,” while you hate and revile the heart and the head; for you to act thus is perfectly natural, while it is quite as natural for me to pursue a contrary course.—Having now, Sir, answered your charges against myself and my work, I shall, in my next, take up the remaining points, which I have proposed to discuss, and which will, I presume, be found to be of a nature far more interesting than that of the preceding ones. But, though your “*true English feeling*,” though your boasted *constancy and consistency*, together with your theatrical and parliamentary *connexion with the news-printers*; though all these charming topics should drop from my pen in dullness double distilled, I beg you to recollect, that the correspondence was not of my seeking, and that it is to you and not to me, that the public will look for an apology.—I am, Sir, your, &c. &c. WM. COBBETT.  
August 30th, 1803.

## TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—Perhaps there never was a time in the annals of the British Empire that required greater abilities and firmness in the Cabinet, and greater magnanimity, fortitude, and courage among the people. In a contest of such magnitude and so fraught with

\* See the quotation to this sheet.



danger; a contest in which our very existence is at stake, we should expect to find men most famed for wisdom and experience, who have been long tried, approved of, and esteemed by the nation, placed at the head of affairs, and wielding with a firm hand, the incalculable energies of a brave and loyal people. No common degree of boldness, decision, and comprehension of mind, should characterize ministers in doubtful and stormy times; and especially ministers of this country, who ought, from their stations as rulers of a mighty Empire, never to follow, but at all times to take the lead in the intricate politics of Europe. From watching and following the motions of an enemy; from the timid and enervating views of mere defensive operations, no praise either for intrepidity or capacity, for deep penetration or extensive design can either justly be claimed or bestowed. The spirit, resolution, and courage of this country, in the hands of men of vigour and capacity, especially in these seasons of feverish alarm, when there is felt both an inclination and an energy unknown in peaceful times, is such as would prove fully adequate not merely to repulse an invader and confine him within his shores, but to rescue from his cruel fangs the oppressed nations of Europe. Our commerce and trade have created us a navy, great and terrible beyond example. Are the population and spirit of the country not sufficient to produce armies or an armed people equally formidable to our enemies? They certainly are; and need only a due share of magnanimity and address to organize them; and no very refined nor extensive views of policy to perceive what weight and influence such a measure must have in restoring peace and security not only to this Empire but to the whole world. We live not in common times. We have no common enemy to contend with. We behold a gigantic power raised upon the broad basis of an extensive, populous Empire, and supported by all that is great in capacity and dangerous in principle, grasping at universal dominion, and threatening destruction to the last asylum of liberty. Let us be apprized of our danger, and let us be prepared to meet it. With firm and undaunted hearts, let us be prepared to meet it: and let us not merely look upon it at a distance, and interpose the tremendous thunder of our fleets to overawe our enemy, but let us view it in every shape of real horror which it would assume, should Heaven in its vengeance, or we by our cowardice and irresolution, suffer the French to subdue us.—The people in this country ought to be aware that all the

cruelties the French have perpetrated, whether in their own country, in Italy, or in Egypt, will be mild in comparison to the ferocity and barbarity they would every where exhibit should they once get a footing among us. Our education, habits, and principles; our religion and liberties, and indeed every feature of the British character would ill assort with the stern aspect of lawless despotism; would ill bear the brutal violence and instigated cruelties of ruffians who have no principle of honour, or faith; who have no feeling, no compunction, no mercy. Hollow murmurs would fill up the pause of suspicious silence. The free-born Briton could not repress his indignant feelings amidst the havoc and devastation of his country. He could not look on, as an indifferent spectator, at the tortures and massacre of his countrymen and relations. He could not hear the cries of the innocent victims of the brutal lust or wanton cruelty of the lowest and vilest of the species, without braving the fury of his oppressors in their behalf. Every field would be a field of blood: every family a scene of mourning: every place the charnel house of liberty, the grave of freedom. The whole island, one vast prison, one bloody scene of proscriptions and massacre; one dreary waste of lost independence and intolerable slavery; where no joy could ever dwell; no hope could ever come but from wild despair or premature death. Other nations overrun by the French, though they suffered much, yet had never known the value of liberty, nor felt the free unshackled mind; were unacquainted with the noble pride of independence. They fell not from such a height of glory as we would fall. The proud monuments of our greatness, and the still more valuable blessings of all that can adorn, all that can exalt human nature, would sink under the iron rod of oppression. Is there any so remote or so incredulous to whose ears the awful and tremendous revolutions of Europe have not reached, on whose callous mind the imperfect descriptions of French ferocity and cruelty have made no impression? Is there any so fond of lawless dominion, so eager for rapine and blood; who, with minds so base, with hearts so degenerate, would prefer the jealous despotism of a Corsican tyrant, to the mild government of our Gracious King; or who would not, at this awful crisis, come forward and say, "before God and my country, I swear to defend her rights and independence, with the last drop of my blood?" If there be any such among us, in God's name transport them to the soil of France, so rank and foul



with traitors, and let them come in the van of the tyrant's army to meet, on their native shores, the just vengeance of their countrymen. Let them not, by their unworthy complaints, weaken our energy. Let them not, by their cowardly insinuations, damp our courage. Let them not by their temporising policy, dissolve our unanimity. Let them not, by their mean submission, familiarise us to the language and aspect of slavery. The spirit of this country, I trust, is very different from this mean, I had almost said, this traitorous disposition, with which a few, and but a few, are actuated. The same spirit that roused the Athenians to meet their foes on the plains of Marathon, ought to inspire us to an equally glorious achievement. The same spirit that fired the heroic breast of Scipio and those Romans who fought the decisive battle of Zama on a hostile land, should animate us not to wait for, but anticipate the blow\*. Let us not confine it to a few who may have more interest, but, I hope, not more inclination, to come forward and defend their country. The spirit of patriotism is as fierce and terrible in the breast of the peasant as in that of the wealthiest subject of the kingdom. With him it does not evaporate in empty words, or in mere contributions. It may even be unknown to himself till excited by emulation, felt by contrast, and roused by danger.—I respect and honour the promptitude of those who voluntarily offer their services for the defence of their country. In times, such as these, every mark of public spirit, from whatever quarter it comes, ought to be cherished and blown up to a flame. Whatever rank in society they hold; whatever their personal merits may be, they cannot, in such a blaze of patriotism, and amidst the general indignation of men of all descriptions against the common enemy, be either remiss or backward in their duty. Let us cheer them by our praises, not retard, not despirit them by ungenerous insinuations. None of them, I trust, grasps a sword, or handles a musket, but has determined in his mind, should the enemy reach our shores, to conquer or die. What other alternative is there between victory and death? If we were not what we are, and had not such a prize, such a possession to lose, caution might be necessary in entrusting the defence of the king-

\* The maxims of the Romans, to remove the seat of war, from their own, into an enemy's country, was equally wise and safe: and the counsel of Scipio to this effect, was founded upon the justest and most extensive views of policy.

dom to such hearts and hands only as were known to be staunch and firm. But here we have one common interest that imperiously calls upon every man to stand firm, if he would ensure the undisturbed possession of all that can render property, friends, and the noblest blessings of life desirable. I would only make it one great national measure, as it ought to be, and not leave it to the exertions of individuals, who, though zealous and ardent in the cause, cannot be expected to have such influence or such authority as to bring the whole population of the country into active preparation. I would extend it to the peasantry of every denomination, and endeavour to rouse them by the love they bear to their parents, wives and children, to come forward and arm in their defence. It requires some delicacy and address indeed, to work upon their feelings and even to make them comprehend their duty. Their views are confined, not fallacious. Their temper is suspicious, not fickle. Their loyalty is sincere, not ostentatious. Their courage steady, not impetuous. It requires address to counteract their habits, to turn and familiarise their minds to new objects, and to induce them to perform extraordinary duties with cheerfulness. It is well known, from many recent and terrible examples, how easily artful men can work upon their feelings and passions; how easily they are trained to the most desperate actions without any rational aim or settled purpose. It is only necessary to touch a master string in their breasts; to appeal to their passions by strong and urgent motives; and you may lead them, as easily, to what is great and magnanimous, as to what is sordid and base. From the undebauched peasantry of this country, men of upright minds, uncorrupted principles, and sound understanding, an appeal to their honour and independence would, in the present emergency, be warmly received. To their honour and independence, to their manly and generous feelings, and not to any sordid views of interest, that must fetter and chain down their minds, I would appeal. Let them not be wronged, nor any undue hardship be put upon them, and they will come forward at the voice of their country. Do not hire them to fight for their country instead of teaching them that they have a deep interest in defending it. Alleviate their burdens instead of increasing their pay. Those who work for a recompense regard it more than the end or intention of their labour. Do not degrade them so much in their own estimation (for on vulgar minds



it must have this effect) as to hire them to fight for their lives, like mercenaries, instead of rousing them by all the great and magnanimous virtues which grow out of true, disinterested patriotism. On great and extraordinary occasions, like the present, every motive that can induce patriotic feelings and heroic conduct should be employed. And what other motive more powerful than a conviction that our freedom is at stake? This is the prize for which we must all contend. The undisturbed possession of this, is the noblest, most honourable reward we can obtain. All other objects are nothing compared to this. The tyrant's soldiers may acquire pay and plunder, a mercenary boon, fit only for adventurers and slaves. Let us cultivate a Roman spirit and sacrifice every thing for freedom. In it are comprehended parents, relations, friends, property, country, religion and laws, and every enjoyment that a free born Briton alone can prize. Without it, we are nothing, and are worth nothing. In this island, as in her chosen temple, freedom has long dwelt. Here, as on the altar of the universe, the sacred fire has long burned. Her hardy votaries raised to her, in many a bloody field, trophies of eternal renown. Many a tyrant felt the lightening of her eye, and the vengeance of her arm. Britons, in the cause of freedom, have dared every thing, have endured every thing. In that sacred cause, the mature work of ages, the complicated wisdom of many generations, nothing is too arduous for them to attempt. No sacrifice, but the sacrifice of liberty itself, too great. No danger, but the danger of losing it, terrible. We stand alone, a single nation, intrepid and fearless, not only in defence of our own liberties, but the liberties of Europe; and not only of Europe, but of every nation barbarous or civilized, remote or near, upon the face of the earth. On each single arm rests the liberty of millions. On each patriotic deed depends the happiness of thousands. On each generous resolve hangs the fate of nations. This is no exaggerated description, heightened and coloured by imagination. Look abroad over the face of Europe; view the misery, distraction, despair and tyranny that precede or follow the desolating career of French ambition, and then turn to the refreshing prospect of British independence and heroism, nobly combating, alone, the successful myrmidons of the tyrant, and say, if ever cause was more glorious, if ever freedom was more to be prized than now. — If I am not deceived in the view I take of

our relative situation to the other states of Europe, and the dangers with which we are at present threatened, I do not know a state of more awful responsibility in which the ministers of this kingdom ever stood to God, to their King, and to their country. They have a terrible combat to sustain, that requires the full vigour and application of the greatest abilities, to come off with honour. If they cannot deserve the praise of capacity; for in the present emergency, no ordinary capacity can grasp and direct the mighty engine of this government with all its energy and effect; let them at least deserve the praise of magnanimity, by yielding up their stations and posts to those whose comprehensive minds and intrepid resolution, can plan and direct, and carry into execution, measures of such magnitude and extent as may ultimately both save, and place the nation in a state of absolute security. It is not by putting in motion one part or two of the defence of the country, by which we can reasonably hope to be extricated with honour from the present contest. It is not by a recurrence to former precedents, limited in comparison to the magnitude of our present operations, that we shall baffle and humble our enemy. It is by bringing the whole nation, in all its parts, with all its energy force and power, to bear, first, upon the point of attack, and then upon the most assailable, and most vulnerable part of our opponent's possessions. It is not brute matter that our ministers have to work upon, nor is it the slavish, mechanical mind, that is taught to move in any direction its rulers please to give it; but it is the free-born, noble mind of British subjects, that requires both delicacy and address to win it; that, being won, requires only candor and capacity to move it, with great effect, in any direction not hostile to freedom. The spirit of those who form the great strength of this country, is, I am persuaded, not sufficiently known, and, of course, not duly appreciated. It is, alas! too frequently subjected to petty tyrants, ignorant, often, as they are weak, and brutish as they are wicked. But it is capable of great efforts, of unceasing perseverance, of desperate resolution. The peasantry of this country are a hardy, bold and patient race: sober, temperate, steady; and unacquainted with false principles either of religion or government. They are, perhaps, of all descriptions of men of the same rank in any nation, the most intelligent, and the farthest removed from infidelity and dissipation of any kind. Such



men are the real strength of the nation, although they stand not in such a prominent point of view as mechanics and manufacturers, who, united together in towns, easily take that impulse which example and curiosity never fail to have. Over men who follow the same pursuits and are guided by the same principles. Such were the men who conquered at Oressy and Agincourt; who had, in their ordinary pursuits, weathered the storms and tempests, and were seasoned to hardships and fatigues. Such are the men, who should above all others, be called out to the defence of their country.—I was rejoiced to find that the government were so wise as to pass an act for arming the country at large, and though the plan did not appear to me to be of that extensive kind which circumstances require, yet, I imagined, much might be done, with all its defects, if put in execution. I am sorry to find that they have relaxed from the measure of compulsion, and have limited their views to volunteers alone. For the defence of the country against a foreign invader, taking in every circumstance, the volunteers with the regular troops might be sufficient; but this, as I shall afterwards shew, is not the only thing which our ministers ought to have in view. This plan of mere internal defence is not what will secure us against French ambition. We may be alarmed, in the same state of preparation, for months, for years to come, while our enemy is every day becoming more powerful and more audacious. Our security must depend upon great offensive operations. If the spirit and resources of this country had been broken by any signal calamity; if the nations upon the continent were withheld from attacking France by any thing but fear, I should be far from advising such a measure. But our spirit and resources are great beyond example; the nations upon the continent have more reason than ever to embrace every means and every opportunity to free themselves from the terror of a merciless and faithless foe. Let us suppose that His Majesty's ministers were sensible of this, and knew how to take advantage of, and properly employ, the strength and courage of the country. According to the system first adopted by parliament, every man of a certain description, within the bounds of a Parish or small district, was to be called upon to repair, at certain times, to a place appointed for learning his exercise. I do not suppose that any kind of compulsion would be necessary to draw out the strength of the country, provided the time appointed for learning the

exercise was not in addition to their accustomed labours, but allowed them by their employers, without any diminution of their pay. Even the change of employment, and the pleasure of meeting together, would be considerable inducements. Great caution, I apprehend, would be necessary in the choice of drill serjeants to teach them their exercise. Men accustomed to a sober life would resent the bullying speeches and profane oaths of a set of officers, who foolishly imagine that big words and volleys of oaths add to their dignity and inspire fear. With all sober men, they inspire nothing but contempt, with all religious men aversion and horror. I am no puritan, but, I know something of the nature of man, and how such a mode of conduct would affect the peasantry of this country. Prejudice, it may be called by our modern fine gentlemen, but I would be sorry to see such prejudices eradicated from their minds.—Let us suppose, however, that the young men in a district are embodied, that they meet at stated periods to learn their exercise; and that in a short time they can perform the usual evolutions with considerable dexterity. This is all that can be expected of them, by the provisions of the act. I speak as if it were to be carried into execution. But would this exercise make them good soldiers, capable of meeting and sustaining the shock of a regular army, accustomed to a variety of complicated movements, and extensive but closely connected operations? To effectuate this, something more is necessary. They ought to be accustomed to act together in a body. For this purpose, the different corps in each county, should all be required to attend upon a certain day at a convenient place, and be there inspected by the General commanding in the district. They should be encamped for a few days. They should be taught to act in concert, and to imitate, as nearly as possible, the evolutions of a regular army. By this means, they would soon become completely disciplined, and this nation would be as formidable by her military, as by her naval power. Such a time should be selected for calling out the different corps as would be least injurious to the interests of the country. Those festival days, for instance, that are usually spent in idleness and frivolity, might be employed to much better purpose and with much more satisfaction, in the hardy exercise of arms. Proper encouragement should be given for any extraordinary exertion, and some badges of honour, perhaps, bestowed, to stimulate the different corps to excel. A military and active spirit should be care-



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fully kept up, and strict discipline, on all occasions, enforced. The consequences of this plan may, I think, be obvious to all. The nation would become a military nation, without much expense, with very little loss of time, and without endangering the constitution. It is an extraordinary measure, and therefore the ministers seem to have startled at it, but these are extraordinary times, and call for no ordinary exertions. It would temper the commercial spirit to which we are too much inclined, and would infuse a life and vigour into the nation which it never felt before. But its effects would not terminate here. If the enemy does not attempt an immediate invasion, his object will be to weary us out, to keep us in a state of perpetual alarm, and to watch the time when discontent may break out among us. We shall, in the mean time, be forced to incur immense expense; we shall be burthened with oppressive taxes. The people, after their ardour is cooled, will begin to murmur, and the most fatal consequences may ensue. To obviate this, as far as human prudence can avail, the strictest economy ought to be practised. No superfluous waste, no needless offices, no unmerited pensions ought to remain as a burden upon the people. This would reconcile them to the necessity of measures: and it is what surely ought to be performed. The greatest encouragement should be given to enlist in the troops of the line. They ought to be augmented very considerably. On them all offensive operations must depend. The arming of the people will form a counterpoise to their strength for internal and legal security, and will give efficacy and effect to all their external operations. This, if I am not deceived, is the only way to save this nation, in the first instance, and to restore the balance of power in Europe. Our ministers seem, however, to be afraid of trusting the people with their own defence. If they are really convinced that Buonaparté will soon make an attack upon this country, why are they so slow and irresolute in their measures? Why are they so ill provided with every thing, and so dilatory in putting the country in a posture of defence, as if our enemy would wait until they should throw out a signal that they were ready to receive him? They talk perpetually of the magnitude of the danger without resorting to effectual means to oppose it. They call upon the country to support them without taking instant measures to organise it. The people, when they can purchase an exemption from ser-

vice in the Militia or Army of Reserve, have recourse to this measure. They learn the urgency of the danger from the tone and preparation of the minister. Whenever he is remiss and dilatory, they become remiss and dilatory. If he is active and resolute, the nation soon catches the same spirit. But at present, the strength of the country is not brought into action; it is left rude and undisciplined. A general arming would reach to all; would prepare all for the combat. And should the French be desperate enough to hazard an attempt upon us, little doubt, I think, may be entertained of the issue. The continental powers ought to be timely prepared for such an event. Upon the ruin of the expedition against this country, and the consternation which would follow among the French armies, they ought to be prepared to begin an immediate attack upon France, and our ministry should have a great force ready to send over to the continent to second their attempts. We shall then be in no dread of a second invasion. Buonaparté will then find sufficient employment for his troops at home, or should he make the attempt, he would find our shores begirt with armed hosts ready to oppose him with the best hopes of success. The high and gallant character which the British troops formerly acquired upon the continent, and recently in Egypt, and the disasters of the French expedition, would both dismay the enemy and gain entire confidence from the continental powers, such, especially, whose interest it would be to co-operate with us towards rescuing themselves from slavery. By putting the confederacy under our management, and placing at the head of it, an experienced, active, intelligent conciliating officer, what is there that we might not effect? Not all the legions of the tyrant would be capable of resisting British valour, seconded by an indignant, injured people. There would be a noble field opened for military fame. Our generals and our soldiers would there acquire that character which can only be gained by active service, and which they never can acquire when cooped up within the verge of this island. By a powerful co-operation France might be driven within her ancient limits; the power and renown of her consular tyrant blasted: his laurels plucked from his brow by the hands of a vindictive soldiery, or an infuriated mob. The legitimate king might be restored to his throne, and all through the exertions of this country. She ought to be the *primum mobile* to rouse the dormant powers of Europe. Their



alliance may be reasonably expected when they perceive the vigour and extent of our preparations to resist and harass the enemy. If Buonaparté fail in his attempts upon this country they will be forced into a war with France. His power depends upon opinion alone. When reverse of fortune shall have alienated from him the affections of his soldiers, he will soon add another name to the long list of tyrants, who, for a short time usurped power, and fell by the very hands which had been most active in raising them to greatness.—I again repeat that our success, if not our salvation, depends upon a general armament of the people, and upon training them properly to the use of arms. The peasantry and labourers in this country must be employed in case of an invasion. Better, surely, would it be to prepare them beforehand for such an event, than have to call for their services in the hour of need, unprepared, scattered in all directions, and, perhaps, through a consciousness of their defenceless state, deterred from resisting an enemy. But if they shew that courage which I know they possess; and if ever it should come to the dernier resort to rely upon their exertions, beware, lest in the hour of victory and under the direction of improper persons, they do not, with illegitimate arms, attempt to new model the constitution, and change the government of the kingdom.—In great and desperate struggles, boldness, and anticipation of an enemy's designs, under proper management prove generally decisive. Much of the success of the French, during the last war, may be attributed to those bold and original plans, which men of genius formed and conducted. In all our operations, as well as the weapons which we use, we are generally humble imitators. To what is this owing? Are there no men of genius in the nation, or do they not meet with that countenance and reward which their researches deserve? One cause, I believe, of our falling far behind the French in military tactics and improvements is, because our officers have little opportunity to exercise and call forth their talents. They spend, for the most part, an inglorious life, carousing, and mingling in every fashionable, effeminate assembly. Too few of them possess education or industry necessary to adorn or rise in their profession. Let me be understood. I speak not of the generality, not of the whole collective body of military officers. There are some, who, I am credibly informed, and their actions speak it, are an honour to themselves and their

profession. It is a pity their example has not a better effect.—I shall conclude this paper with one general reflexion drawn from present circumstances. The existence of this country as a great and free nation, if I can judge from history and the usual course of events, depends upon extensive, prompt and decisive measures. At present, the minds of the people are so inflamed against the audacious threats of the First Consul of France, and so eager to repel all his attempts, that they willingly submit to many sacrifices, and overlook many instances of oppression and mismanagement, which they will not so readily do, if they find no effectual measures are adopted to free them from their burdens and fears. If an invasion does not take place, and no revolution happens in the government of France, nor some great movement begins upon the continent, our taxes must accumulate to an enormous amount; commerce and trade will suffer severely; discontent will universally prevail, and our nerveless ministers will find, that the spirit of the country, now so ardent and generous, will then have either sunk into apathy, or be wasted into bitter and, I trust, not ineffectual complaints against themselves. If the discontent of the country run high, its strength may recoil upon them, or be wasted away before an invader. Let them avert these dangerous and not improbable evils by timely preparation and decisive measures. Now is the time for mighty plans and mighty deeds. Every moment that is wasted in making half-preparations, and meanly providing for an insecure defence, is ruin to the country, is protracting our misery and accumulating our disgrace.

“Hoc Ithacus velit, et magno mercentur  
“Atridæ.”

Edinburgh, 20 Aug. 1803. OBSERVATOR.\*

#### TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In your last Number, where you have done me the honour to insert my letter to the Earl of Suffolk, I am sorry to observe a *typographical* error, which may wound the feelings of a meritorious, much-respected, and good officer, and I am confident you will be inclined to correct a mistake which has arisen either from the *illegibility* of my writing, or the *inadvertance* of the printer. It was my intention to mention the *Earl of Craven* as an officer whose *military character* is but little known, and whose *public achievements* have not *hitherto*

\* With some few of the opinions contained in this letter we do not altogether concur.—EDITOR.



been such as to render him *particularly* worthy of a very distinguished mark of approbation.—The Earl of Cavan is, Sir, an old, admired, and experienced officer, who has obtained no other favour than that of being placed on the staff of Great Britain. Had I observed a regiment bestowed on him I should have considered it a *due reward* for long and real services.—I am, Sir, your obedient Servant, A. B.\*

### DOMESTIC OFFICIAL PAPERS.

*Letter from the SPEAKER of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, to the Lords Lieutenant of Counties, inclosing the VOTE OF THANKS given by the House to the VOLUNTEERS.*  
House of Commons, Aug. 10, 1803.

My Lord,—By command of the House of Commons, I have the honour of transmitting to you their unanimous Vote of Thanks to the several Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps of the United Kingdom, for the promptitude and zeal with which, at a crisis the most momentous to their country, they have associated for its defence; accompanied with an order, that a return be prepared, to be laid before the House in the next Session of Parliament, of all Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps, whose services shall have been then accepted by his Majesty, describing each corps, in order that such return may be entered on the Journals of the House, and the patriotic example of such voluntary exertions transmitted to posterity.—In communicating this resolution and order, I have the greatest satisfaction, at the same time, in bearing testimony to the confidence with which the House is impressed, that the same spirit and exemplary zeal will be exerted throughout the present contest, until, with the blessings of Providence, it shall be brought to a glorious issue.—I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

CHAS. ABBOT, Speaker.

To the Right Hon. Lord &c. &c. &c.

#### The Vote.

*Mercurii, 10 Die Augusti, 1803.*

RESOLVED, *nem. con.* That the Thanks of this House be given to the several Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps of the United Kingdom, for the

\* NOTE OF THE EDITOR.—After correcting the mistake which our Correspondent points out, and which was not his but the printers', we still are not prepared to agree in the full extent with his remarks.

The nobleman in question was, we are informed, a very creditable example of a young man quitting the enjoyments of rank and fortune, in order to embrace the hardships of a soldier's life; of which he seems to have taken, too, his full share. We remember to have noticed the name of Lord Craven, both upon the Continent, and in the West-Indies; and never heard, but that he served with perfect credit. To what degree persons of his description should be allowed a preference over the mere soldier of fortune, is a nice question. Something ought to be given to that principle, though commonly, in all likelihood, too much is given. Upon the present instance we do not feel ourselves sufficiently informed to give any opinion.

promptitude and zeal with which, at a crisis the most momentous to their country, they have associated for its defence.—*Ordered, nem. con.* That a return be prepared to be laid before this House in the next Session of Parliament, of all Volunteer and Yeomanry Corps, whose services shall have been then accepted by his Majesty, describing each corps in order that such return may be entered on the Journals of this House, and the patriotic example of such voluntary exertions transmitted to posterity.—*Ordered,* That Mr. Speaker do signify the said resolutions and order by letter to his Majesty's Lieutenant of each County, Riding, and Place, in Great Britain, and to his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

*Letter from LORD HOBART to the LORD PROVOST of the CITY OF EDINBURGH, inclosing a Plan for a VOLUNTARY NAVAL ARMAMENT.*

[See Register, page 272.]

*Downing Street, Aug. 15, 1803.*

My Lord,—I have the honour to transmit the outline of a plan for a Voluntary Naval Armament, for the protection of the coast, which has received the approbation of his Majesty's confidential servants, and which, it is believed, may be carried to an extent that would complete the security of the coast, under all circumstances, against any attempt on the part of the enemy, and be likewise productive of other beneficial consequences.—I have particular satisfaction in acquainting you, that the East-India Company, the Corporation of the Trinity House, the Cinque Ports, the Proprietors of Lighters employed in the Foreign and Domestic Commerce of the Thames, and several of the Owners of Ships employed in the Coasting Trade, have already come to resolutions for carrying the proposed plan into execution.—The importance of the Commerce of the Port of Leith, and the loyal and liberal spirit of its inhabitants, animated and encouraged by your active and well-directed zeal, afford the strongest ground of expectation, that this measure may derive essential assistance from the resources in men and shipping which that town possesses, and that, by means of a judicious application of those resources, the Coast of the County of Edinburgh may obtain that constant protection which, you must be aware, might not at all times be equally attainable by any other means.—I have the honour to be, &c. &c. &c. HOBART.

To the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh,  
&c. &c. &c.

*Letter from LORD HOBART to the LORDS LIEUTENANT of Counties. Dated Downing Street, August 15, 1803.*

My Lord,—I am to request your lordship will inform me, with as little delay as possible, what quantity of arms will be necessary, in addition to those already in possession of the Yeomanry and Volunteers, to complete the number required for the several corps in the County of —, already authorized by his Majesty.—The number of arms, either not returned to his Majesty's stores at the conclusion of the last war, or since delivered to corps formed in the County of —, amounts, as far as has been ascertained by the Board of Ordnance, to —. Your lordship will understand it to be the intention of Government, that the whole number of Volunteers now proposed to be armed, should not exceed six times the number of the Militia, exclusive of the Supplementary quota.—Upon the receipt of



your lordship's answer, instructions will be given to the Board of Ordnance, to send the arms to such place within the County of —, as you may point out, in order that they may be distributed under your lordship's directions, to the several corps which may require them. — I have the honour to be, &c. &c. HOBART.

*To his Majesty's Lieutenant  
of the County of —*

*Letter from LORD HOBART to EARL FITZ-  
WILLIAM.*

*Downing-street, Aug. 19.*

MY LORD, — I have had the honour to receive your Lordship's letter of the 17th, and I lose no time in acquainting you, that the printed regulations for volunteer infantry, issued in June last, are not to be considered in any respect applicable to corps accepted by his Majesty since the date of my circular letter (the 3d) of August, restricting the allowances before given to volunteer corps of infantry, to the allowances of 20s. for clothing, and 1s. per day for twenty days exercise; and to corps of cavalry, to the contingent allowance of £120 per troop. — With respect to arms — I have to request your Lordship will inform me what quantity will be necessary (in addition to those with which the several corps can provide themselves, and to those already in possession of the yeomanry and volunteers), to complete the number required for the several corps already authorised by his Majesty. — Your Lordship will understand it to be the intention of government, that the whole number of volunteers, now proposed to be armed, should not exceed six times the amount of the militia, exclusive of the supplementary quota. — Upon the receipt of your Lordship's answer to this letter, instructions will be given to the Board of Ordnance to send the arms, as soon as they can be prepared, to such place within the riding, as you may point out, that they may be distributed under your Lordship's directions, to the several corps according to your Lordship's discretion. — The discrimination which it will become your Lordship's duty to make in the distribution of the proportion of arms you will receive, should be guided by a reference to the local situation of the corps requiring them. I have the honour to be, HOBART.

*Earl Fitzwilliam &c. &c. &c.*

### INTELLIGENCE.

FOREIGN. — The King of Cochin China has published an edict, granting to English ships free permission to enter all the ports of his dominions, and exempting them from the payment of port-duties, and every other species of impost. — In consequence of a representation made to the Grand Signior, by Gen. Brune, the Ottoman Ambassador, whose departure for Paris had been some time delayed, was immediately ordered to set out for that capital. Two important sittings of the Divan have been held, at the instance of the English and French ministers at Constantinople. — Numerous tribes of banditti have, for some time past, infested the remote parts of the Ottoman

Empire; and several caravans, laden with Turkish and Grecian merchandize, passing from Constantinople to different parts of Germany, have, lately, been plundered on the frontiers. — Many of the inhabitants of Suabia, and Wurtemberg have been persuaded to emigrate to the Upraine. Considerable numbers recently embarked on the Danube, for Hungary, whence they continued their route, by land, to Russian-Poland. — A Russian squadron, commanded by Admiral Krusenstern, and destined to circumnavigate the globe, sailed from Cronstadt on the 23d of July. — An ordinance of neutrality, forbidding all the subjects of his Imperial Majesty to enter the service of France or England, either by sea or land, was published at Vienna on the 7th of August. — His Britannic Majesty, as Elector of Hanover, has protested against the Convention of the 5th of July, as having been concluded without his knowledge or authority. — The ratification of the Convention, concluded on the 15th of June, between the French, Batavian, and Italian Republics, relative to military operations against England, have been exchanged at Brussels, on the 24th of July. — The blockade of the Elbe has produced the greatest distress in the City of Hamburgh, and in all the places dependent on the navigation of that river. — The Neapolitan troops, which were sent to garrison Malta, have returned in detached bodies to Messina, Syracuse, and other ports of Sicily. — An American squadron is collecting at Messina, whence, after obtaining some Neapolitan gun-boats it will sail, on an expedition against Tripoli.

DOMESTIC. — The special commission for the trial of the rebels in Ireland, was opened on the 24th of August, when, after a charge made to the grand jury by justice Downes, bills of indictment were found against sixteen persons. — A proclamation was issued on the 20th, by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, ordering all the inhabitants to remain within their houses, from nine o'clock in the evening until six in the morning, and to affix to their doors, lists of all the persons residing in the house. — Martial law has been proclaimed in the counties of Kildare and Westmeath. — Several of the principal conspirators among whom is the brother of Counsellor Emmet, have been taken, and many depôts of arms, have been discovered. In one which was found in Thomas Street, were 17,000 pikes, 11 boxes of powder, 14 bundles of cannon powder, 42,000 rounds of ball cartridge, 246 hand grenades, 156 grappling irons, and



various other articles of military stores. — It is reported that, on Sunday last, fires broke out in three different parts of Dublin, and that, although every exertion was made by the soldiers, and well disposed inhabitants of the city to extinguish them, they caused very extensive destruction. — The greatest dissatisfaction prevails throughout England, in consequence of the refusal of government to accept the offers of all the volunteer corps which have tendered their services. Some of these corps have declared that their number shall not be lessened, and that government shall either have all or none, and others more enraged, have determined to disband themselves. — Much offence has been given in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, by the riotous and disorderly conduct of some of the volunteers. — For some days past reports have been in circulation of a conspiracy in Jamaica, but letters from Port Henderson, dated on the 3d of July, are silent on the subject.

**MILITARY.** — Detachments of French conscripts are daily arriving in Hanover, for the purpose of being armed and clothed at the expense of the Hanoverians. The troops now in the Electorate are to be reduced to 12,000 men, who will be commanded by Gen. Montrichard; the rest, under the command of Gen. Mortier, will form a part of the army destined for the invasion of England. A park is forming, in the environs of the City of Hanover, of all the artillery, &c. belonging to the Hanoverian army, which, together with that at Kameln, will supply the place of the French artillery sent to Breda. — Great preparations are making in Hanover to aid in the invasion of England. All the carpenters are pressed into the service, and timber sufficient for the construction of 160 flat-bottomed-boats is to be taken from the forests of Lauenburgh. — the French are raising a legion of Hanoverians, who are to take an oath of allegiance to the French Republic. — Gen. Cassagnes has fixed his head-quarters at Gouda, and Gen. Dumonceau is mustering all the Batavian troops in North-Holland, whither the artillery, which was at Gorsel-Heath, has been sent. Gen. Brune has the command of the Batavian troops in Zealand. — Large bodies of troops are constantly arriving on the coasts of Belgium, where an army of 50,000 men is forming under the command of Gen. Angereau: the head-quarters will be at Bruges. Gen. Massena is to have the command of the army assembling near St. Omers.

**NAVAL.** — On the 19th of July, Captain

Aylmer, in the *Wasp*, captured the French Privateer *Le Desespoir*, pierced for 10 guns, and carrying 28 men; three days from *Hodierne*. — It is reported that Lord Nelson has taken possession of the City and Fort of Messina, and has declared, that if the French occupy Naples, he will occupy Sicily. — A British squadron is blockading the Island of Guadaloupe. — French privateers are fitting out in many of the Spanish ports, and British prizes are frequently carried in there and sold. — Several small vessels at Stadt and Harbourg are preparing to descend the Elbe, for the purpose of compelling the British vessels to raise the blockade of that river. — The following is a statement of the present distribution of the British Naval Force.

	Line.	50's	Fig.	Sp.	Tot.
In Port and fitting, and with sealed orders .....	17	2	21	0	88
Guard Ships .....	6	3	0	0	15
English and Irish Channels ..	17	2	24	29	72
Downs and North Sea .....	9	1	25	43	77
West-Indies and Passage ....	3	0	10	13	26
Jamaica station .....	7	0	3	10	20
America and Newfoundland ..	0	2	7	4	12
Cape of G. Hope, East-Indies,	5	4	8	8	25
Coast of Africa .....	0	0	0	2	2
Portugal and Gibraltar .....	5	0	2	2	9
Mediterranean and on Passage	11	2	15	8	36
Hospital and Prison Ships ..	7	0	3	0	10
Total in Commission ..	87	16	124	167	393
Receiving Ships .....	6	1	7	1	15
Serviceable and repairing ....	10	1	12	5	29
In Ordinary .....	72	7	64	21	164
Building .....	20	0	11	10	41
Total .....	194	25	218	207	641
ORDINARY.					
Portsmouth .....	27	1	22	7	57
Plymouth .....	29	2	16	4	51
Chatham .....	29	6	15	3	53
Sheerness .....	1	0	7	5	13
River .....	2	0	23	8	33
Total .....	88	0	83	27	207

### SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

**CONTINENTAL POWERS.** — The hopes, which were, some time ago, entertained of our obtaining the co-operation of a part of the continental powers, seem now to have vanished. Austria is resolved not to move; Russia is afraid to stir with ministers such as we have at present, and Prussia, though once upon the point of marching an army to the protection of Hanover, will now suffer any injury from the blockade of the Elbe and the Weser rather than take part in the war. It is very certain, however, that, on the 23d of May, the King of Prussia signed



an order for putting *fifty thousand* men in readiness to march for the protection of Hanover; but, having set out for Magdeburg, in the night of the 23d or 24th of May, he there, by the advice of Beymé, revoked the order. Haugwitz, minister for foreign affairs, Schulenberg, minister of state, Field Marshall Mœlendorff, and even Lombard, secretary and cabinet counsellor for exterior relations, are said all to have approved of the order; and, it is stated, that, in consequence of the revocation, Haugwitz has obtained leave to visit his estates in Silesia, where he now is. It is well known, that leave of absence of this sort, in the courts upon the continent, are frequently regarded as resignations, or dismissions, from office, in the same way, that leave to travel is sometimes regarded as a sentence of banishment.—This intelligence, on the authenticity of which our readers may place a perfect reliance, shows, in a very striking light, the imbecility of our ministers and their agents. We long ago complained of the sending of so inexperienced, so every way unfit a person as Mr. Jackson, to a court like that of Berlin. What should such a man as Mr. Jackson do? how is it possible that he should ever gain over any one to his opinion, even supposing him to hit upon a right opinion himself? he has been a consul; his education has been commercial, rather than political, and his notions are, we dare say, confined within the narrow compass of his little parsimonious bureau. Is it in the power of such a man to make converts to his views? Can he carry conviction to the mind of a hesitating statesman? The rank, talents, information, and manners of an ambassador should be such as to render his society at once an honour and a pleasure. What honour should M. Beymé, for instance, perceive in associating with Mr. Jackson; what information could he derive from him; how could he possibly care any thing about him?—But, however unfit this ambassador may be in other respects, as the representative of our ministry, he is by no means inadequate to his situation; and, if they were all in the service of the Little Turtle, or some other monarch of the trans-atlantic woods, we should have no objection to their living and dying in office.—There can be no doubt, that, if we had had an able ministry at home, and an able ambassador at Berlin, Hanover would at this day have been in quiet possession of the House of Brunswick; whereas, we now think it very probable, that, unless a very great and very speedy change takes place in the councils of this country, it never will be

possessed by that House again. The loss of Hanover, too, falls in with the prejudice of the people of this country, who think they have got rid of a burthen; a prejudice which the ministers are not ashamed to encourage, while they affect to regard themselves and their adherents as being exclusively the "*friends of the King*." Against the further effects of their friendship, may God defend His Majesty and his Royal House!

**VOLUNTEER CORPS.**—When we were, in our last sheet, endeavouring to describe some of the evil consequences likely to result from this system; when we were styling these corps "*seminaries of indiscipline*," we hardly imagined, that, with all their *committees*, and their *presidents*, and their *resolutions*, and their *votes*, and their *elections*, we should so soon have witnessed the verification of our remarks. We published on Saturday, and on Monday we found one of these bodies of "*defenders*" deliberating upon an order received from the war office, and coming to a resolution, "*one and all, not to obey it*": that is to say, they were in a state of downright mutiny, for which, if they had been under laws, such as are alone fit for soldiers, every tenth man of them ought to have been shot.—The causes of the discontents amongst the volunteer-corps men require to be briefly stated, previous to any remarks as to the mode of restoring harmony in the country. The ministers have, all along, proceeded upon the maxim, that their places are to be kept by no other means than that of *following the humours of the people*. Upon this maxim they delayed the measures for defence, till, to use their own words, "*the people called for them*;" and, upon this maxim, finding that the General Arming Bill, which provided for the compulsory drilling of persons of all ranks, was not very well received, they availed themselves of the clause relative to volunteer-corps, and immediately pressed the lord lieutenants to obtain as many volunteers as possible.—The General Arming Bill was amended by another, and the ministers acquired new popularity from the suspension of the provisions relative to the compulsory drill. In the mean-time, volunteering went vigorously on, thousands and hundreds of thousands, of all ages, were daily pressing forward in the cause of their country, till in a very short time, there was, we are informed, a *million* of men, whose names had been enrolled as members of volunteer-corps. Upon perceiving this propensity to volunteering, Mr. Sheridan, whose "*true English feeling*," like the tears of a tra-



gedian, may at all times be considered as a perfectly disposable force, saw a fair opportunity of ingratiating himself with all the weaker, and, for this purpose, the better part of the male population of the kingdom; and, with this view he brought forward the memorable *vote of thanks*, a correct copy of which, together with a correct copy of the speaker's circular letter, will be found in the preceding pages of this sheet.\* Our readers will recollect, that we objected to this vote of thanks on several grounds, but particularly as it gave so high and so solemn a sanction to the system of volunteer corps, to the prejudice of every other sort of service. We expressly stated, that men were rushing into these corps, not from a desire to be foremost in meeting the enemy; but, on the contrary, with a view of avoiding the risk of such a meeting at any time whatever; they have, said we, "put on a soldier's habit to avoid a soldier's duty." This soon became apparent even to the ministers themselves, who, to their utter surprize and consternation, discovered, that the acts which had been passed, exempted the members of volunteer corps, not only from the compulsory drill, as provided for by the General Arming Act, but also from all the effect of all the provisions of the *Army of Reserve*, and even the *Militia Acts*. In short, it was, on or about the 18th of August, found out by the ministers, that, by a fair interpretation of the several acts, compared with one another, the volunteer corps would be a sanctuary for all those who were crowding into them. But, to render this sanctuary inviolable, effectually to shelter the volunteer from the danger of becoming a soldier in the army of reserve, or half a soldier in the militia, it was necessary that the offer of service of his corps should be *accepted* by His Majesty. This provision enabled the ministers to check the growing mischief. By a letter dated Aug. 18th, Lord Hobart informs the lieutenants of counties, that "the *inconvenience* which must unavoidably arise from carrying the volunteer system to an unlimited extent, has determined his Majesty not to authorize, at present, any additional volunteer corps to be raised in any county where the number of effective members of these corps, including the yeomanry, shall exceed the amount of *six times the militia*, exclusive of the supplementary

\* By correct, we mean *authentic*; for, we beg leave to be distinctly understood, as not pledging ourselves for the *grammar* or the *sense* of either of these documents.

"quota." Before this notification was received, and had been fully *explained* (for every word these men utter requires explanation,) the number of volunteers had, in many places, amounted to five or six times that of the militia. *Reduction*, therefore, is now become the order of the day. Some of the persons, who have enrolled themselves, or, as they phrase it, "signed the declaration," must be rejected; and, whether they are vexed at being excluded from a participation in Mr. Sheridan's thanks, or at being again exposed to the army of reserve and the militia, certain it is, that they are extremely angry with the ministers, with respect to the ignorance, imbecility, indecision, and pusillanimity, of whom, they have, at last, adopted our opinion. The offers of the men we by no means applaud; because, though some of them were, doubtless, actuated by public spirited motives, the far greater part of them evidently were not, else they would now quietly submit to be excluded. We rejoice at the reduction, be the cause what it may, inasmuch as we prefer a less evil to a greater. But, whatever may have been the motives of the volunteers, whatever may be the magnitude of the evil prevented by the measure which has given them umbrage, it must be confessed, that the conduct of the ministers, in this respect, has been most scandalous, if not highly criminal. On the 30th of July, they inform the lieutenants of counties, that "it is the opinion of His Majesty's *confidential servants*" [a phrase, by the bye, which they use with great ostentation] "that, in all places where volunteer corps can be formed, upon such conditions as His Majesty shall approve, it would be desirable, that EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT, should be given for that purpose, such an arrangement being calculated to concentrate the force, to promote the *convenience of the public*, and to render it unnecessary to have recourse to the compulsory clauses of the act." On the 3d of August, addressing themselves to the same persons, they say: "the necessity of the *earliest attention* being given to the *training and exercise* is so generally felt, that I am persuaded your lordship's instructions for that purpose will have their due weight, and that they will be framed with a proper regard, as far as is consistent with the *urgency of the conjuncture*, to local circumstances." What, then, had happened between the 3d and the 18th of August to render drilling unnecessary (for the letter of the 18th puts a stop to it), and to render the volunteer



system *inconvenient*? On the 3d of August the "confidential servants" were of opinion "that EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT *should be given*" to the system; and, one of their reasons was, that it would "promote the convenience of the public:" but, on the 18th of August, they discover an "*inconvenience* which must *unavoidably* arise" from this very same system! No; say they, not from the system, but from carrying it to an "unlimited extent." Why, then, did you not fix the bounds of the extent? Why did you order "that every encouragement" should be given to the system? And who was to understand from such instructions any thing short of a desire to obtain as many volunteers as possible, and to limit the system within no other bounds, than those of the population of the country? The fact is, that they had brought in and caused to be passed, laws, the meaning of which they themselves did not understand; and, when they discovered their mischievous effect, they were compelled, though at the risk of plunging the country into discontent, to issue orders, the operation of which, should be to nullify the principal provisions of these laws. They now find, that their favourite volunteers, to whom they called upon parliament to pass a vote of thanks, will, if continued, render the ballots for the militia and the Army of Reserve an intolerable burthen upon those, who remain to be balloted; and, it must be evident, that *injustice* would be absolutely unbearable, as it would put it in the power of the committee of the volunteer corps of any parish, not only to choose who should be admitted into the corps, *that* would be nothing, but, *who should be exempted from the militia and the Army of Reserve!* And, this is the case *even now*, wherever there is a volunteer corps, upon the new establishment, whose offer of service is, or shall be, accepted by the King. Suppose Mr. Sheridan, for instance, obtains a promise from the lord lieutenant to have the offer of a corps, which he shall raise, accepted by his Majesty. The volunteering gentleman goes to work, in his parish, and first he makes up a committee. This committee open their books; and, as they have an absolute power of admitting or rejecting, all those whom they choose will be admitted, and, of course, exempted from the ballot of the militia and Army of Reserve; and, all those, whom they do not choose to admit will be still liable to those ballots. Did the parlia-

ment ever intend this? did they ever intend to pass into a law any thing at once so cruelly and so insultingly oppressive? The ministers now perceive this, and they perceive, too, that the volunteer-corps system has produced a stagnation in the recruiting for the army, which would rather have been assisted than impeded by the general training, especially of the peasantry. Afraid, however, even now, to take a manly and decisive part, they have adopted the miserable expedient of *super-numeraries* to the volunteer corps, which super-numeraries are to *find their own arms*, and are to *claim no exemption from the ballots of the militia and Army of Reserve*, than which there never was a measure better calculated for the perpetuating of discontent, and for exciting ill-will and quarrels amongst those, on whom we are taught to rely for defence against the enemy. Thus do these feeble creatures, whom God, in chastisement for our supineness, has permitted to be placed over us, blunder on from folly to folly, creating, wherever they move, nothing but confusion; and yet they demand more implicit confidence from the parliament and the people, than the ablest and wisest ministers ever dared to hope for. Six months it is now, since His Majesty informed his parliament, that there was imminent danger of invasion; and, except from the sources which existed previous to that time, not one single soldier has been obtained for the defence of the country! But, we trust, that, because the public servants of the state fail in their duty; the people will not fail to perform the great duty, which they owe to their Sovereign and their country; but rather to make so much the greater exertions; to learn so much the more to depend on their own hearts and hands; and, without regard to the wavering imbecility of an incapable administration, to work out, as they may, their own political salvation, not with fear and trembling, but with fortitude and manly resolution.

✍ We are compelled to postpone, till our next, several topics, on which we intended to offer some observations, particularly the publications relative to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales.—We are glad to hear that our remarks on the LLOYD'S FUND are likely to put a stop to that system of quackery.

A. B. is requested to address his papers *directly* to the Editor, and not to send them, as he hitherto has done, by a circuitous route.

ERRATA.—Last sheet, p. 297, l. 40, for "Garonne" read "Garonne;" p. 303, l. 30, for "boats" read "body."